DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 393 730 SO 025 553

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TITLE	Excellence and Equity in Art Education: Toward Exemplary Practices in the Schools of Illinois. The Position of the Illinois Art Education Association. Part One.
SPONS AGENCY	Illinois Art Education Association, Aurora.
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	7p.; Part 2 to be published in Fall of 1996.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Art Education; Curriculum Development; Curriculum Guides; *Curriculum Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation; Relevance (Education)
IDENTIFIERS	*Illinois; National Standards

ABSTRACT

This is the first part of a two-part position paper, updating an 1986 position statement, developed by the Illinois Art Education Association for the elementary, middle-level, and secondary schools in the state of Illinois. Part 1, the "Introductory Statement," highlights the contemporary context of educational reform as an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the role of art education in the lives of young people. The "Introductory Statement" is intended to advance discussions among educators and other interested persons about the steps that should be taken to provide challenging curricula, effective instruction, and relevant forms of assessment in every art class in Illinois. This document expresses a call for action on the part of art teachers regarding specific goals and statements of the fundamental beliefs underpinning the "Introductory Statement." Specifically, fundamental beliefs include: the continuity of change, the necessity of creativity, and the importance of individualism and diversity in a democracy. The paper concludes with a list of the national standards for arts education. (DQE)

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Excellence and Equity

ED 393 730

Part One

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Published by the
Illinois Art Education
Association
1995

Dedication

To the teachers of art in the State of Illinois with whom the responsibility for achieving excellence and equity in art education ultimately rests.

Introductory Statement

Excellence and Equity in Art Education is a two-part position paper developed by the Illinois Art Education Association for the elementary, middle-level, and secondary schools in the State of Illinois. Part One, the Introductory Statement, highlights the contemporary context of educational reform as an opportunity to clarify and strengthen the role of art education in the lives of young people. The Introductory Statement is intended to advance discussions among educators and other interested persons about the steps that should be taken to provide challenging curricula, effective instruction, and relevant forms of assessment in every art class in Illinois. Part Two of the position statement, the Comprehensive Version, provides more detailed descriptions of conceptual frameworks, curriculum scenarios, program designs, course plans, and forms of assessment. It also addresses more specifically the issues of equity, minority and gender concerns, and implementation procedures.

Mission of the IAEA

The mission of the Illinois Art Education Association is to provide leadership for the advancement of quality art education:

- To advance professional development and the pursuit of knowledge and skills,
- To facilitate communications,
- To promote conditions for the effective teaching of art,
- To cooperate with other organizations,
- To impact educational change and reform,
- To encourage membership, maintain financial stability, and promote efficiency of the organization's operation.

ACCEPTANCE OF A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AND EQUITY IS A CHALLENGING PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT FOR ALL THOSE WHO TEACH ART IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

KIMM STASTNY

The Subject Is Art and Art Education

Art has been defined in various ways and has traditionally fulfilled a range of social, religious, political, and personal functions. But after all that can be said in behalf of such definitions and functions, what remains central is the idea that art at its best reveals a superb mastery of materials and form, a profound expression of humanity, the spirit of the age or period in which it was created, visions of new creative possibilities, and a significant relation to tradition. At their best, works of art stimulate the imagination and induce a high degree of aesthetic satisfaction. And by virtue of the models they present for imitation or rejection, works of art encourage persons to reexamine not only their own beliefs and values but those of others.

At different times throughout history, artists have favored representations of reality, formal and structural qualities, the expression of feelings and emotions, and the conveyance of social, religious, or political values. These preferences can also be observed in the work of contemporary artists. It follows that the teaching of art should include the study of the artistic styles and traditions that exemplify these interests and the problems they pose to aesthetic understanding. This can be done by calling on relevant disciplines that address creative, historical, and critical considerations (e.g., art making, art history, art criticism, aesthetics, etc.). The teaching of art should also include the study of artworks by past and present artists, artists of various ethnic origin and of both genders, all within the general framework of striving for excellence and equity

Such a view of art and art education is consistent with the *Illinois State Goals for Learning in the Visual Arts* and the *National Standards for Arts Education*. In combination, these two sets of standards provide viable guidelines for teaching art to young people.

IF IN THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO WE GENERATE EXCITEMENT, WONDER, AND DISCOVERY OF THE MAGNIFICENT ARTISTIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF HUMANKIND, AND, IN ADDITION, NURTURE PERSONAL CREATIVE IDEATION, THEN OUR ROLES AS EDUCATORS WILL HAVE BEEN SATISFIED

MARILYN SCHNAKE

The Goals of Art Education in Illinois

According to Public Act 84-126 of the State of Illinois, students should, as a result of their schooling, be able to do the following:

- understand the principal sensory, formal, technical, and expressive qualities of each of the arts;
- identify processes and tools required to produce visual art, music, drama, and dance;
- demonstrate the basic skills necessary to participate in the creation and/or performance of one of the arts;
- identify significant works in the arts from major historical periods and how they reflect societies, cultures, and civilizations, past and present; and
- describe the unique characteristics of each of the arts.

The Illinois Art Education Association endorses this statement of goals. As the major statewide organization for teachers of art with responsibility for providing leadership in the development of an understanding and appreciation of art in the schools, the Association stands ready to offer active assistance to other professional educators and community groups in advancing the goals of art education. This assistance may consist of consultations, in-service workshops, seminars on special topics, meetings with teachers, administrators, and public officials, exhibitions of various kinds, and other services schools request.

A Call for Action

The Introductory Statement is the first step in updating the Association's position statement of 1986. At that time, the Association delineated foundational beliefs, state, district, and school obligations, professional standards, curriculum content, class duration, and class size. The new position statement also addresses such considerations.

The need for a new statement stems from recent developments in the field of art education which are both promising and challenging. Never before in the history of art education in the United States has there been such a clear call for establishing the arts as a basic component in the education of all students. National standards have been articulated, a plan for assessing educational progress in the arts is in place, and the State of Illinois (along with other states in the nation) is setting standards and assessment criteria for teaching the arts. The time is one of unparalleled opportunity, and it calls for action on the part of art teachers.

Excellence and Equity in Art Education

By its very nature, art invokes intimations of excellence. We treasure works of art for their astonishing qualities and human significance. At their best, they represent the epitome of human achievement and constitute the principal source of pride and unity for any community, nation, or civilization. One sense of the term *excellence* refers to the qualities and import of works of art worthy of perception and admiration, qualities and meanings that the young can strive to achieve in their own creative efforts. Another sense of excellence refers to exemplary practices in teaching art. The term *equity* implies not only the right of all in a democratic society to have access to excellence, but, in addition, the parity of art with other subjects in the curriculum and the equal participation of art teachers in formulating school policy and curriculum content. Likewise, art teachers are entitled to equitable compensation and budget allocations.

An excellence curriculum for art education takes shape when art is conceived as a subject with an identity as distinct as that of other academic subjects. This is to say that art is an area of study with its own objectives, content, values, and methods. While teachers of other subjects are free to employ the arts or any other subject areas to achieve their objectives, attainment of art goals and appreciation of excellence in art is possible only by devoting special time and knowledge to doing it. Art is, after all, one of the supreme achievements of humankind with power for expressing and affecting thought and feeling. This power has been evident since the origin of art and is attested to by a history of determination to control it by totalitarian societies. A set of visual art disciplines with such potency deserves and requires its own curriculum, time, and space.

Art Education and Educational Reform

Art education contributes to educational reform in two important ways:

- Art education assists in achieving the goals of the educational reform movement initiated in the 1980s, and
- Art education suggests a model for learning itself.

General Goals of Educational Reform

- Comprehensive instruction in basic ways of knowing about the self, nature, and society.
- Development of higher-order mental operations as an important part of learning.
- More relevant and effective modes of assessment that relate to the learner's active participation.
- Greater stress on multidisciplinary studies that encourage the learning of principles, relationships, and generalizations across subjects.
- Working arrangements with external groups and organizations that assure collaboration and partnerships for a community of learners.

Exemplary Art Education Practices that Serve the Goals of Reform

- Teaching art as a basic way of knowing by challenging thought and inquiry.
- Learning tasks that actively involve the young in making and understanding art.
- Assessing student learning that correlates instruction, relates to student interest and motivation, and involves self-assessment and reflection through formative and portfolio assessment.
- Integrating creative activities with historical and critical studies.

Art as a Basic Way of Knowing

Each of the visual arts exhibits a distinctive way of knowing. The way of painting is not that of photography; the way of sculpture is not that of architecture; the way of weaving is not that of the computer. The unifying element of these different forms of visual expression is the capacity of artists to endow visual objects with vital significance, a capacity that addresses the human condition by making compelling visual images.

Examples of the power of vision are legion: religious images that show the ability of love to alleviate suffering; heroic images that depict efforts to transcend seemingly insuperable obstacles; images of celebration that express pride in human accomplishment; images that bestow dignity on domestic life and induce cherishing of the qualities of nature; images that stir to social action; and so forth. And, of course, there are the images fashioned by young people themselves, fresh and dynamic images that reflect their joys and fears.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALIZE THE TRUTH THAT ART AS A SIGNIFICANT MEANS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING AND THE EXPRESSION OF IDEAS AND FEELINGS PRECEDED AND TRANSCENDS VERBAL COMMUNICATION IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY CHILD IN SOCIETY

MARILYN NEWBY

Art Education as a Model for Learning and Multidisciplinary Studies

The exemplary practices of art education further provide a model for learning in other subjects. They do this primarily through recognition of the necessity for active participation on the part of the young. One cannot learn by rote how to make works of art or appreciate their peculiar energies. The young must realize for themselves how to shape form and content and perceive the complexities and significances of artworks. The demands of making, perceiving, and interpreting further activate and integrate the higher-order mental powers of problem solving, divergent thinking, and critical reflection (which calls upon both left- and right-hemispheric brain activity). What is more, the teaching of art is an inherently multidisciplinary activity, calling upon the resources of several disciplines.

ART EDUCATION IS A CRITICAL NECESSITY FOR ALL STUDENTS BECAUSE THE EXPRESSIVE POWER OF WORKS OF ART AFFORDS VALUABLE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES WHICH NOT ONLY ENCHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH GENERAL EDUCATIONAL GOALS AS PROBLEM SOLVING, INDEPENDENT THINKING, AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

STACY SLACK

Art Education as an Assessment Model

Portfolio assessment, long associated with the teaching of art, is now gaining recognition as a valuable mode of evaluation in other academic subject areas. This model, which assesses individual progress through cumulative evidence of a portfolio rather than reliance on test scores alone has been widely acclaimed by the education profession. The processes of thinking and creating are easily demonstrated and assessable with this model.

Art Education as a Means of Coordination with Communities

The teaching of art naturally reaches out into the community's museums and cultural resources. Relevant subject matter for art making and for understanding art of our own society as well as that of past eras and distant cultures also extends into every part of the young's world and engenders a heightened awareness of resources beyond the classroom.

Art Education as a Model for General Learning

Art education, especially when grounded in the basic premises of modern cognitive studies, provides a model for general learning. Contemporary thinking about cognition features an information-processing image of mind and a systemic approach to the understanding of learning that humanistically monitors the relations of inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback. In different terms, a systems approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of parts and wholes and recommends an ecological view of learning. Rather than studying discrete aspects of learning or schooling, an ecological view takes the whole picture into account.

Underpinnings

Underpinning the Introductory Statement are a number of fundamental beliefs:

Change Is Natural and Continuous

Society is an ongoing process of change. At times, changes are dramatic and overwhelming, while at other times they are gradual and scarcely noticeable. People, too, are in a perpetual state of change, adjusting to new conditions as best they can. Nowhere do teachers perceive change more vividly than in the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social lives of their students as they move from grade to grade. Change, then, is an inevitable feature of art education.

Creativity Is a Human Necessity

Creativity springs from the human capacity to imagine and reflect on possibilities. The results of imagination may be practical, or they may consist simply of the insights and pleasures derived from contemplation. Either way, both the individual and society benefit from its cultivation. For the individual, the benefit is a greater capacity for self-awareness. For society, the benefit is an expanded sense of its present and its future.

APPRECIATING THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF A WORK OF ART INVOLVES AN AWARENESS THAT EACH WORK EXPRESSES NOT ONLY AN ARTIST'S UNIQUE PERSONAL VISION AND THE TIME IN WHICH IT WAS MADE, BUT ALSO RELATIONS TO OTHER FORMS, TECHNIQUES, AND STYLES, PAST AND PRESENT.

JEROME HAUSMAN

Individualism and Diversity Are Important Democratic Values

A democratic society respects the inherent value of each individual. Each person is biologically unique, has a distinct genetic structure, exists in a specific time and place, and has a personal style. No field of study places more emphasis on the individual than art education. Respect for individuals and their unique potentialities is thus a basic premise of teaching art. Indeed, we can expect to make little progress toward educational reform until we respect the young for their inherent capabilities.

THE PERVASIVENESS OF VISUAL COMMMUNICATION IN THE MODERN WORLD [illegible] THAT TEACHERS OF ART MUST GIVE GREATER ATTENTION TO THE CREATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF ARTISTIC IMAGES FOR THEIR ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND HUMAN SIGNIFICANCE.

ROBIN RUSSELL

A Richly Diverse Common Culture Is the Goal of a Democratic Society

Respect for the uniqueness and creativeness of individuals ensures a mosaic society of individuals and their significant accomplishments. Yet, just as the elements of a mosaic are secured within a binding medium, so a richly diverse culture is kept from disintegrating through the commitment of its members to a set of common ideas and ideals, often universal in nature. Through the study of art, the profession of art education seeks to preserve and to develop a richly diverse common culture.

ART AT ITS BEST IS A PERPETUAL REMINDER OF THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSCENDING THE COMMONPLACE. IT CONSTANTLY CALLS US AWAY FROM A PEDESTRIAN EXISTENCE.

RALPH A. SMITH

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National Standards for Arts Education

What Students Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts

- *Communicate at a basic level in the four arts disciplines—dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts.* This includes knowledge and skills in the use of the basic vocabularies, materials, tools, techniques, and intellectual methods of each arts discipline.
- *Communicate proficiently in at least one art form*, including the ability to define and solve artistic problems with insight, reason, and technical proficiency.
- *Develop and present basic analyses of works of art* from structural, historical, and cultural perspectives, and from combinations of those perspectives. This includes the ability to understand and evaluate work in the various arts disciplines.
- *Recognize exemplary works of art from a variety of cultures and historical periods* and have a basic understanding of historic development in the arts disciplines across the arts as a whole, and within cultures.
- *Relate various types of arts knowledge and skills within and across the arts disciplines.* This includes mixing and matching competencies and understandings in art making, history and culture, and analysis in any arts-related project.

ANY COMMITMENT TO QUALITY IN VISUAL ART EDUCATION MUST ENCOMPASS THE CULTIVATION OF LITERACY IN ELECTRONIC IMAGING, A VITAL SKILL OF THE FUTURE.

STANLEY MADEJA

COVER IMAGE: Richard Hunt *Growing Forward* 1994 Welded Bronze. In the artist's collection.

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